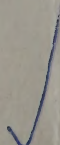




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INDIANA COLLECTION



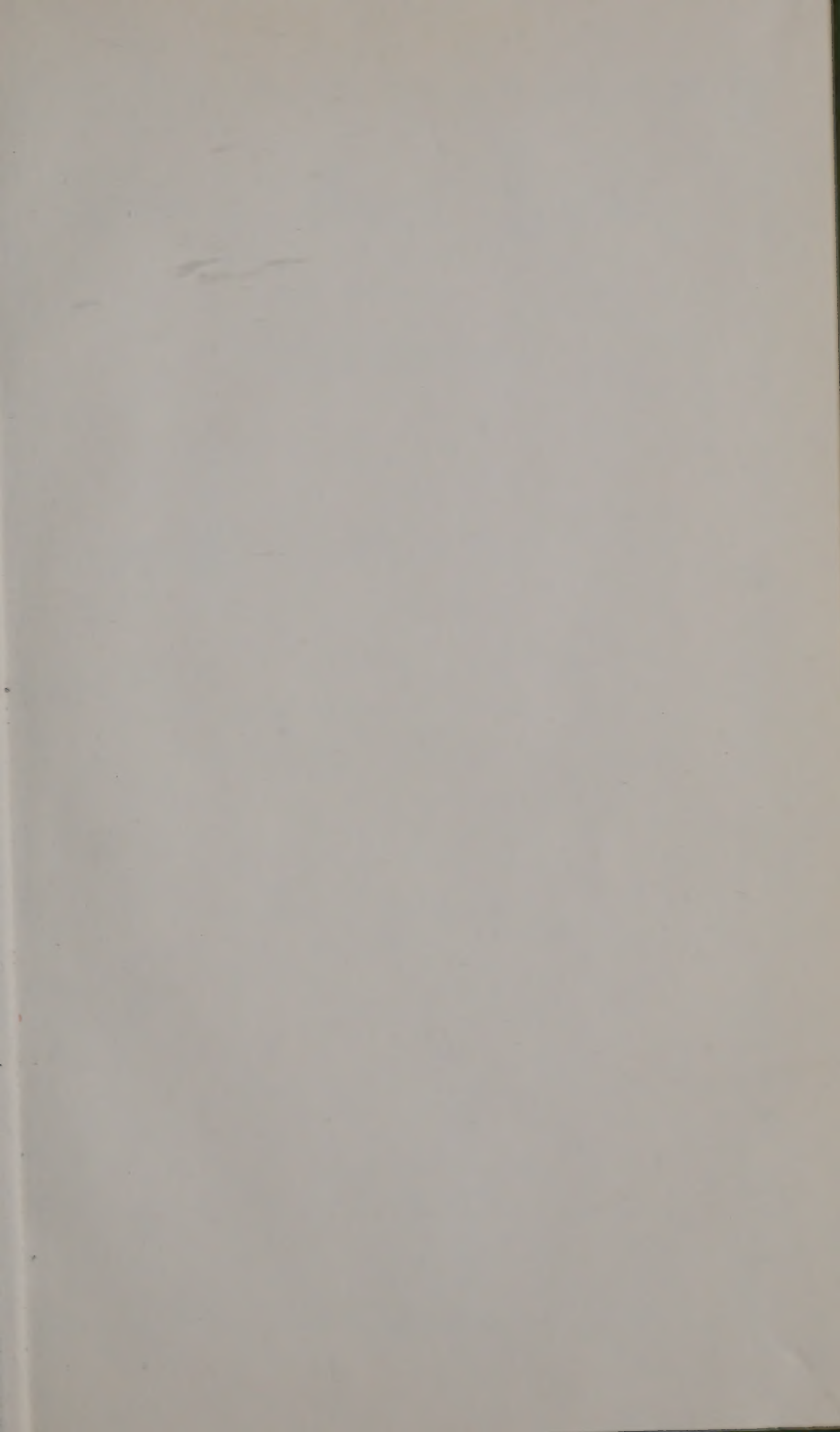
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American Central Railway.

PROCEEDINGS

OF A

RAILROAD CONVENTION

HELD AT FORT WAYNE, IND.,

ON THURSDAY, DECEMBER 20, 1855.

bind in cover

COMPILED BY E. C. WILSON, ESQ.,
SECRETARY.

HUDSON, OHIO:
PENTAGON POWER PRESS.

1856.

AMERICAN CENTRAL RAILWAY.

LIST OF OFFICERS

OF THE

VARIOUS RAILROADS REPRESENTED IN THIS CONVENTION.

VENANGO RAILROAD.

PENNSYLVANIA.

Arnold Plumer, *President*, Franklin, Pa.
Edwin C. Wilson, *Secretary*, do.
Ralph Clapp, Esq. *Agent*, President, Pa.
Edward Appleton, *Chief Engineer*, Boston, Mass.

DIRECTORS.

Samuel F. Dale, Franklin, Pa. J. Porter Brawley, Meadville, Pa.
Edward A. Penniman, Philadelphia, Pa. Joel W. White, Norwich, Conn.

CLINTON LINE RAILROAD.

OHIO.

H. N. Day, *President*, Hudson, O.
Charles Pease, *Secretary*, do.
Moses Messer, *Treasurer*, do.
W. B. Brinsmade, *Chief Engineer*, Springfield, Mass.
J. V. Terry, *Resident Engineer*, Kinsman, O.

DIRECTORS.

Augustus Ellsworth, Hudson, O. H. A. Miller, Cuyahoga Falls, O.
I. C. Dow, do. J. S. Tilden, Parkman, O.
Chauncey Taft, Farmington, O. Riverius Bidwell, Kinsman, O.

INDIANA COLLECTION

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OF
FORT WAYNE
IND.

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THE following is a copy of the CALL which brought together the Délégates from the various Railroads, which formed this Convention :

FORT WAYNE, IND., Dec. 5, 1855.

SIR :

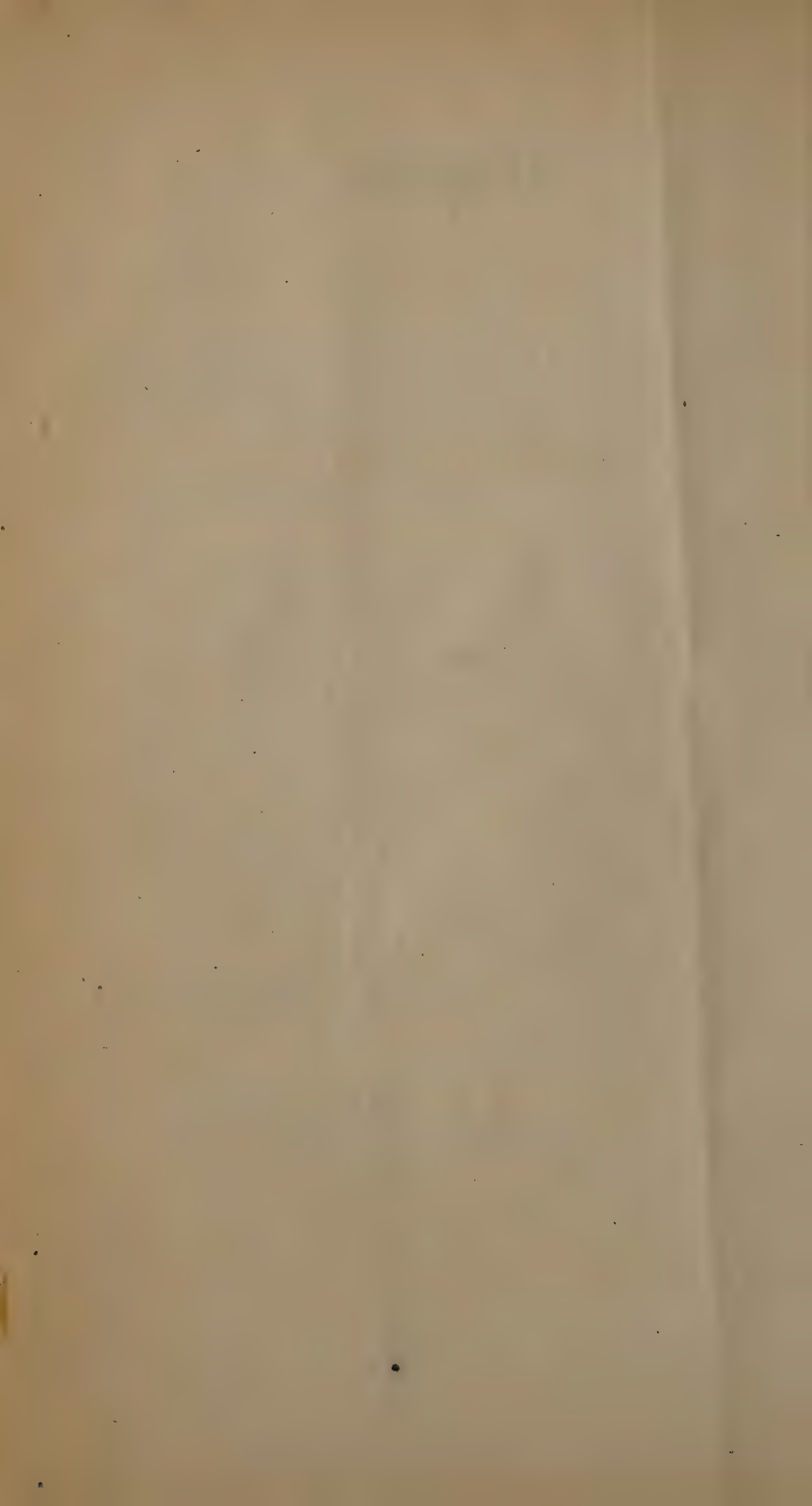
The Boards of Directors of the Indiana, Illinois and Iowa Divisions of the FORT WAYNE, LACON & PLATTE VALLEY AIR LINE RAILROAD will meet in the Rockhill House, in this city, on Thursday, the 20th December inst., and would be pleased to meet Representatives from the Eastern Railroads connecting with, and forming the eastern outlet of their road. It is important that a proper understanding should now be had by all the Companies forming this Great East and West Through Line, and such arrangements made as will lead to a union of interest and concert of action on the part of all concerned.

Your attendance, and that of any others from your Company, is, therefore, respectfully invited.

Yours, truly,

ROB'T C. SCHENCK,

Pres't Fort Wayne, Lacon & Platte Valley Air Line R. R.



PROCEEDINGS.

In pursuance of the annexed call, a large and respectable assemblage of officers from various railroads convened at the Rockhill House, in this city, on Thursday, the 20th inst., from the States of Pennsylvania, Ohio, Indiana, Illinois, Iowa &c., comprising delegates from the Clinton Line, Clinton Line Extension, Tiffin & Fort Wayne, Venango Railroad, Pa., Fort Wayne & Mississippi, Western Air Line, and Philadelphia, Fort Wayne, & Platte River Air Line Roads.

On motion, COL. CURTIS, of Iowa was appointed temporary Chairman, and THOS. TIGAR, of Indiana, Secretary.

On motion, HON. R. C. SCHENK, of Ohio, GEN. WILSON, of Pa., DR. J. BELL, of Iowa, W. B. SWEET, of Illinois, and R. E. FLEMING, of Indiana, were appointed a committee to report officers for the permanent organization of this Convention. HON. R. C.

SCHENCK, from said committee, reported the following, which were unanimously concurred in :

President — HON. ARNOLD PLUMER, of Pa.

Vice Presidents — PROF. H. N. DAY, of Ohio, DR. H. T. CLEAVER, of Iowa, WM. FISHER, of Illinois, L. S. BAYLESS, of Indiana, HON. VAN R. HUMPHREY, of Ohio, LEVI CHASE, of New York.

Secretaries — GEN. E. C. WILSON, of Pa., W. B. BRINSMADE, of Massachusetts, ERASTUS HURD, of Illinois.

On motion of PROF. H. N. DAY, HON. R. C. SCHENCK was added to the number of Vice Presidents.

R. G. PENNINGTON, ESQ., from the Committee on Delegates, reported the following, as present :

Clinton Line Railroad — H. N. Day, President, W. B. Brinsmade, Engineer, J. V. Terry, Resident Engineer, and R. Bidwell, Agent.

Clinton Line Extension — Prof. H. N. Day, President, Hon. Van R. Humphrey, J. W. Wilson, and W. L. Hedges.

Tiffin & Fort Wayne — R. G. Pennington, President, P. Ferguson, Engineer, S. D. Bayless, W. Redfield, Contractor.

Fort Wayne & Mississippi — Hon. R. C. Schenck, President, L. S. Bayless, Vice President, R. E. Fleming, Secretary, T. Tigar and W. Rockhill.

Western Air Line—E. Hurd, Engineer, E. A. Whipple, Secretary, W. Fisher, W. B. Sweet, T. Henderson, Ira I. Fenn.

Philadelphia, Fort Wayne & Platte River—S. Townsend. J. M. Herrick, H. T. Cleaver, J. Bell, J. Bird, Col. Curtis, and Levi Chase.

Venango Railroad—Hon A. Plumer, President, Gen. E. C. Wilson, Secretary, and Ralph Clapp, Agent.

On motion of DR. J. BELL.

Resolved, That all persons connected with railroads and interested in the objects of this meeting be requested to take seats in the Convention.

On motion of HON. R. C. SCHENCK,

Resolved, That one or more delegates from each of the various railroad incorporations now present, be requested to give their views, experience, and prospects in relation to the companies in which they are immediately interested.

In obedience to the above resolution, the following gentlemen proceeded to address the Convention, in substance as follows :

COL. S. R. CURTIS, Engineer, from Keokuk, Iowa, was called on to report prospective Western Extensions of Railroads, and the peculiar connection of the Roads here represented with the Pacific Railroad. He responded as follows :

“It is now universally conceded that our Railroads must, at no distant day, be prolonged westward, so as to unite them with the waters of the Pacific Ocean. To this end arguments daily increase in number and force, and the subject of a Pacific Railroad has become the most important subject before the Congress of the United States. A general view of the topographical features of this continent presents broad valleys, separated by ranges of mountains, which enter from the narrow Isthmus of the South, in branches, which spread out in various chains, extending far to the north of the United States. The principal valleys may be designated as the Atlantic Slope; the Mississippi Valley; the Salt Lake Valley, and the Pacific Slope. The principal mountain chains separating these valleys are the Alleghanies, the Rocky Mountains (or Sierra Madre), and the Sierra Nevada; leaving out the secondary chains or sections, such as the Coast Range, Mohave, and Wasatch, which do not appear to me important in this railroad view of the subject. Of the valleys thus separated, the Mississippi Valley occupies about four-fifths of the great plateau, and lines of Railroad extended from the East have passed the Alleghanies at several points, reached the great axis of this Valley, the Mississippi, and are now pressing on west-

ward toward the great chains that separate this Valley from the Pacific. Although the broad slope which rises toward the Rocky Mountains presents no serious obstacles to a Railroad, yet the cheapest route will be found on the valleys of those rivers which afford the convenience of better grades, soil, fuel, water and settlements. But the great obstacles in the Far West, the mountain ranges which I have named, as the Sierra Madre and the Sierra Nevada, must control the general direction of lines which will converge toward the passes of these mountains. Various surveys of different routes have been made, to shew the practicability of different *passes*; but such has been the general confusion of names, and the neglect to connect them with the proper chain, that the public mind is bewildered, and few comprehend the relation of these passes so as to show their bearing on the question of a particular route. The voluminous reports, and extended maps and tables, which have been presented by the Topographical Engineers, have not been so collated by Captain Humphreys or the Secretary of War, as to remove doubts and conclude arguments; the question of the best route is still an open question, which will further delay the successful prosecution of a Pacific Railroad. But a candid view of the facts presented must, I

think, narrow down the question of routes to three. These are, the Gila, lat. 32° ; the Platte Valley, lat. 41° ; and the Northern, or Stephens' Route, lat. 47° . It is not within the scope of this report to discuss the advantages presented for passing the great mountain chains on each of these routes. That which most interests the Delegates comprising this Convention is the Platte Valley Route, which I will merely present, taking my data from the reports of Fremont, Stansbury, Gunnison and Beckwith. The points and distances from the navigable waters of the Missouri to the navigable waters of the Sacramento are as follows :

From Council Bluffs City to Bleak Hills.....	491 $\frac{3}{4}$ miles.
From Bleak Hills, by Lodge-Pole Creek and south fork of Platte, to Bridge's Pass (Ft. Bridge).	347 “
From Fort Bridge, via Salt Lake City and Hum- boldt Valley, to Madelin Pass.....	829 “
From Madelin Pass to Ft. Reading, on the Sacra- mento.....	182 $\frac{3}{4}$ “
Total distance, as measured.....	1850 $\frac{1}{2}$ miles.

This line follows the Platte River Valley several hundred miles, Salt Lake Valley and Humboldt Valley, leaving only a small portion for the Mountain work.

To show the coincidence of this line with a true parallel—that of 41° , the most important and central of commercial lines—I will give some points taken from the various Reports of the exploring parties.

Council Bluffs City.....	Lat. 41° 20'	Nicholett.
Fort Kearney (on the Platte).....	" 40° 18' 21''	Stansbury.
Forks of Platte (near Ash Hollow) ..	" 41° 17' 18''	Stansbury.
Divide on Lodge-Pole Creek.....	" 41° 21' 45''	Stansbury.
Fort Bridge, on Green River.....	" 41° 18' 12''	Stansbury & Beckwith.
Salt Lake City	" 40° 45' 37''	Beckwith.
Mud Lake, in Humboldt Valley...	" 40° 41' 48''	Beckwith.
Madelin Pass (Sierra Nevada)....	" 40° 44' 12''	Beckwith.
Fort Reading, on the Sacramento. "	" 40° 30' 02''	Beckwith.

These show the directness of this route and the convenience of the Passes taken as connected with the great Valley of the Platte. The reports of the Topographical Engineers are very decided and their detailed notes are conclusive upon the practicability of this route for Railroad Extension.

This route is central; better supplied with wood, coal and water, than any other route proposed; and pioneer settlements are commenced at various points throughout the Line. Iowa has seven lines progressing and converging towards Council Bluffs, that from Davenport being about finished to Iowa City, 75 miles West of the Mississippi. Nebraska has passed a charter to encourage the Extension from Omaha, her Capitol (opposite Council Bluffs), following up the Platte to the Western boundary of her Territory. Utah has by her Legislature recommended this as the best route for a Pacific Railway; and California has started her first Locomotive up the Sacramento Valley towards the Madelin Pass.

It is not proper on this occasion to elaborate arguments in favor of the adoption of this Western portion by the railroads here represented. It is already adopted by other chains and is so adapted to yours, as to render it a natural result. I present it as a trunk for many lines, and the western link of your chain. The reports from Eastern Delegates, will show the relation to our great Eastern Cities, and I commend the subject to the Convention as worthy of examination and reflection. The Pacific Railroad will be constructed on this route."

DOCTOR J. BELL, of the Philadelphia, Fort Wayne & Platte River Air Line Railroad, said, that this company, in the month of February, A. D. 1853, in conformity with the General Acts of the State of Iowa, was fully empowered to construct a Railway from the Mississippi river, opposite New Boston, Illinois, through Wapello, to Council Bluffs City, on the Missouri, opposite Omaha City, the capital of Nebraska. Mr. Bell in a few brief, pertinent remarks, gave an interesting general history of this portion of the line; that the prospects of its early completion were good; that the ground it passed over was exceedingly fertile, and in regard to the cost of its construction would compare favorably with any road in the Western States; and that the whole energies of its friends

along the route would be given to bring their project to an early and successful termination.

GEN. E. A. WHIPPLE, of Illinois, appeared on the part of the *Western Air Line Railroad Company*, who said that by virtue of a special act of the Legislature of Illinois, passed February 9th, 1853, this Company was authorized to construct a railroad across the State of Illinois, from the town of New Boston, on the Mississippi river, to Lacon, on the Illinois river; thence in the direction of Fort Wayne, Indiana, to the dividing line between Indiana and Illinois. Mr. Whipple presented his views, in sustaining the superior character of this contemplated road, in an eloquent and convincing manner—that the financial condition of *their* road was good, and improving every day.

LOTT S. BAYLESS, ESQ., of Indiana, on the part of the Fort Wayne & Mississippi Railroad Company, said that in conformity with the General Railroad bill of that State, this company, in March, 1853, derived the requisite rights, franchises, &c., necessary for the construction, equipping, maintaining and operating a railroad from Fort Wayne in said State, in a westerly direction to the eastern line of the State of Illinois. Mr. Bayless said that this Company was fully organized—was yet in its infancy,

but time would soon cure that, and he felt sure that its manhood would show a full growth and strong constitution — that they were doing but little, but would soon be enabled to proceed vigorously with the work on the ground, not to look back, until the Iron Horse was on the track.

ERASTUS HURD, ESQ., of Illinois, Engineer of the three last mentioned roads, said that the three companies thus incorporated possess all the powers necessary for the construction and operation of a continuous railroad, about five hundred and eighty miles in length, and have, by their Board of Directors, entered into a contract for the construction and common working of the whole as a unit, and for perpetual consolidation, so far as consistent with the laws of the several States through which the route will pass; thus forming a railway of great importance, having for its eastern terminus Fort Wayne, a place numbering already some 9,000 inhabitants, well built up, and doing a large manufacturing and mercantile business. The western terminus will be the city of Council Bluffs, now numbering some 3,000 inhabitants, although eight years only has gone by since its site was the hunting ground of the tawny Savage. He said that from Fort Wayne to the eastern line of Indiana is nearly a plane; in Illinois and Iowa the

line passes over a succession of prairies, the greater part being flat and without timber, and that for the entire length of the route the country is peculiarly favorable and unusually well adapted to the construction of a first class road; is of extraordinary fertility, and abounding in agricultural products, iron ore and coal; that it needed but the completion of these roads, to develop these immense resources; that the road would do an immense local business, in carrying the surplus to the eastern market; that the fat cattle from their prairies would be the wonder and admiration of the world; that the sweet, round and sleek hams of the hog would almost induce the Jew to desert his ancient prejudices, and appease his appetite upon the forbidden flesh.

R. G. PENNINGTON, ESQ., President of the Tiffin Fort Wayne Railroad, gave an interesting history of this road. He said that much of it was already graded; that in a short time it would be ready for the locomotive; that it was a part of the great Line from the East to the West; and he congratulated the convention and himself that this portion of the line was nearly "out of the woods"; he said the financial affairs of this company would compare favorably with any road in the West. Mr. Pennington was followed by

PETER FERGUSON, ESQ., the Chief Engineer of the Tiffin & Fort Wayne road, who gave briefly a sketch of its grade. He said that the grade was the surface, and that the surface was the grade; that it was nearly a straight line through its entire length, and that it was unsurpassed for its cheapness of construction; that the work done upon the road was of the very best kind, durable and substantial; and such was the nature of the whole road in all its parts, that the greatest speed of the locomotive could be attained on it, with the greatest safety.

PROFESSOR H. N. DAY, of Ohio, President of the Clinton Line and Clinton Line Extension Railroads, said that the very route of all the railroads represented in this convention, was the subject of consideration and discussion as early as the year 1830; that it was originally reconnoitered by Col. De Witt Clinton, Jun., then of the U. S. Topographical Engineers, and recommended by him for the "Atlantic and Mississippi Railroad." The map accompanying the second edition of Col. Clinton's report, which was published in 1830, indicates the line as far as to Council Bluffs, on the Missouri. He said that the roads under his direction constituted connecting links in this grand continental chain of railroads, and that he was glad to meet the officers of these various

roads, in their deliberations to further its completion to the Missouri river; that this great trunk chain of railroad reaches from the Atlantic cities to the Missouri, a distance of over 1200 miles, and 3,000 miles to the Pacific, and radiating through connecting lines of road to all the centres of commerce and population West of the Alleghanies. His statement of the financial condition of his roads; the forwardness of the work, and his hopes of its early completion, were very interesting; as when these roads, together with the Tiffin & Fort Wayne, were completed, it left the Venango Railroad as the only link to be constructed, with a few miles of the Sunbury & Erie, to enable a through intercourse between Fort Wayne, Philadelphia and New York. He expressed his gratification at the determination of this convention not to slacken their energies until the good work was fully accomplished.

RALPH CLAPP, Esq., of Pennsylvania, Agent of the Venango Railroad, in remarks which were extended, took a liberal and comprehensive view of the whole line from the Atlantic to the Missouri River; exhibited its great national importance; its vitality to the interests of commerce and of civilization; to the spread of intelligence and of liberal principles; that every heart should be warmed with the greatness of the

enterprise; and then speaking of the Venango Railroad, he shewed its connection at Ridgway, Elk County Pennsylvania, with the Sunbury & Erie Road, and following its course to its connection with the Clinton Line Road at the State Line, and contrasting its low grades, long curves, straight lines, and diminished distance with the New York & Erie Road, the New York Central Road, and Baltimore and Ohio, and Pennsylvania Central Railroad, clearly and fully demonstrated that its claims to form a link in the great national highway, was second to none; that its advantages to the Western Roads were of such vital importance that it could not be overlooked or passed by; that there was no route through either New York, Virginia, Maryland or Pennsylvania, East & West, to be compared with it for a moment; that there was but one such route, and that route was secured by the charter of the Venango Railroad; the extensive knowledge of the geography of our whole country displayed by Mr. Clapp, gave to his remarks much interest, and he was listened to with marked attention.

HON. ARNOLD PLUMER, President of the Venango Railroad (and Chairman of the Convention), in a few remarks gave an historical account of this road; he enumerated some of the many difficulties that were

thrown in the way, in his endeavors to obtain a charter through North-western Pennsylvania; that in 1853, a charter was granted by the Legislature of that State to the Venango Railroad, giving to that company the right to construct a Railroad from the Ohio State Line, eastward, to any point in the line, or supposed line, of the Sunbury & Erie Road, with most extensive branching privileges, and that it now stood, on the statute books of Pennsylvania, the most liberal charter ever granted to any company in that commonwealth. That the close examination and survey of the route by Col. E. Appleton, its Chief Engineer, a gentleman of great ability and integrity, proved its eminent practicability, and from that time it took its proper place as an important link in the great line of Road between the Eastern and Western Ocean. Mr. Plumer then spoke of its connection with the Sunbury & Erie; that the friends of one were the friends of the other; that the real interests of the two roads were so identical that they could not be severed without injury to both; that he considered the Venango Road as a Pennsylvania Road, and that while its connections with New York were valuable and important, yet he looked to Philadelphia, as its great Eastern terminus and outlet to tide water; and from that beautiful commercial and manufacturing

metropolis, the boast and pride of his commonwealth, he looked for most of the business that was to remunerate those interested, for the labor, trouble, and expenditure of its construction. Mr. Plumer presented facts and statistics, which convinced the convention of the importance of the Venango "*pass*" through Pennsylvania. Mr. P. said he was glad to meet the western friends of this Line in council together; he was gratified beyond his ability to express at the manifestation he had witnessed this day; that the great national highway of Railroads was no *paper* fact only, he saw before him its living witnesses, he had listened to their testimony and had heard with great pleasure their interesting and practical views on the subjects mooted in this assembly; he saw many parts of this great Line already constructed, and others in a great state of forwardness; he said he would go home to his people with renewed spirits and energy; and that as far as he was concerned, his entire influence and energy would be given to the construction of the Venango link of the greatest Line of Railroads in the world.

On motion of HON. VAN R. HUMPHREY :

Resolved, That a committee of one from each road be appointed for the purpose of collecting statistics

and other information, and present the same by a written report to the convention.

Whereupon, Messrs. Ralph Clapp, Col. Curtis, Dr. Bell, E. A. Whipple, E. Hurd, L. S. Bayless, R. G. Pennington, P. Ferguson, and H. N. Day, were appointed said committee.

The convention then took a recess, and after again convening, the said committee made report as follows :

The Committee on Statistics, &c., beg leave to report that they have performed the duties allotted to them, as well as they were able, during the short time given them for their work, and return the following as the result of their deliberations.

SUNBURY & ERIE.

The following letter was received from the Chief Engineer of the Sunbury & Erie Road, which we publish as affording information in regard to the prospects of its completion to Ridgway :

WILLIAMSPORT, Dec. 19, 1855.

*Rob't C. Schenck, Esq., Pres't Ft. Wayne, Lacon
and Platte Valley Railroad :*

DEAR SIR:—It would have given me great pleasure to have attended your meeting on the 20th of this instant, but a severe attack of pleurisy has con-

fined me to my room for more than three weeks past, and incapacitated me entirely for business.

I hope the meeting will be generally attended by those interested in the different lines of road forming an Eastern outlet to the seaboard; and that there will be such concert of action as will give an impetus to the great object in view.

Our prospects for the Sunbury & Erie Railroad for the next season, are very flattering. We are now running 40 miles, and by this time next year we will reach Lock Haven, 26 miles further west, and have 40 miles more, to the mouth of the Sinnamahoning, graded ready for the superstructure, which will be laid early in the season of 1857, and give us 106 miles of completed road west from Sunbury. Eighty-two miles of the western end of our road, were put under contract about two months ago, and will be progressed with during the coming season.

Respectfully,

ROB'T FARIES,
Chief Eng. S. & E. R. R.

W. B. BRINSMADE, ESQ., Civil Engineer, made the following statement, exhibiting in full the

PENNSYLVANIA CONNECTIONS.

The Clinton Line claims two proposed Eastern connections, of which the one leading most directly to the cities of Philadelphia and New York, is the Venango Line, represented by its officers in this Convention. The other leads also to New York by a connection, across Pennsylvania, with the New York & Erie Road, and to Boston by means of the proposed Binghampton and Albany Railroad. Of this connection, which is here unrepresented, I would state in answer to some inquiries, that the Pittsburgh & Erie Railroad Company, under a charter granting them branching privileges, are now constructing a road from the Eastern terminus of the Clinton Line at Kinsman, through Jamestown, Meadville, Cambridge, &c., to a point on the New York State line, where it is intersected by the Erie & New York City Railroad, now nearly completed from that point to the New York & Erie Road, at Great Valley Station. The entire route, embracing that portion in Pennsylvania as well as New York, is over very favorable ground, admitting easy gradients, at comparatively low cost. The maximum grade has been fixed at 40 feet per

mile, but even this maximum will be necessary only at few points and for short distances, except in overcoming the elevation between Crooked and Conneaut Creeks, some twelve miles east of the Ohio State line. The balance of the distance, the line follows well defined valleys of gentle ascent and descent, requiring little variation from a level grade, unless for the sake of economy or to reduce the curvature.

The portion of the route in New York State, some 48 miles, is nearly graded, 33 miles of it (from the New York & Erie road to Jamestown) being now in readiness for the iron. That portion in Pennsylvania has made less progress, only 6 out of 81 miles being as yet completed. Like other new projects having merit, it is now recovering from the recent depression, and indications are favorable for a more energetic movement throughout the line. One year well employed will be sufficient to complete the connection, and the importance of the outlet to the New York & Erie Company, united to its local advantages, are sureties against any very protracted delay in its construction. The junction with the New York & Erie Road will be at Great Valley Station, 49 miles east of Dunkirk; thence to New York the distance is 411 miles. The line to Boston diverges at Bing-

hampton, by what is called the "Albany & Binghamton Railroad."

This road, 144 miles in length, has been definitely located with no grade at any point to exceed 50 feet per mile, a liberal local subscription secured, the entire work let to a responsible firm of contractors, and a considerable amount of the grading and masonry done. Progress has been suspended now some months, owing to difficulties common to all similar enterprises the past season, but undoubtedly work will soon be resumed, and the road completed within a reasonable time.

If the delegates will allow me to add any thing to their full report of the characteristics of the Venango Line, I would say that I am personally acquainted with Mr. Appleton, their Engineer; that he has kindly allowed me to look over his maps and working profiles, and I am prepared fully to endorse all they have said in regard to the favorable nature of the route he has selected. A portion of the distance, though somewhat heavy work, is yet less expensive than the majority of Railroads in Pennsylvania, while 48 miles of it, from the Ohio State line east to Franklin on the Allegheny River, is light and can be completed at the same time with the Clinton

Line. In the absence of delegated representatives of the Sunbury & Erie Railroad Company, I will take the liberty to say that I have several times, through the courtesy of their Engineer, Robert Farries, Esq., been permitted to examine the maps and profiles of their located line from Ridgway, the eastern terminus of the Venango Road, to Williamsport; I have also frequently been over that portion in operation between Williamsport and Milton. The maximum grade is 52.8 per mile, which occurs only at a single point in overcoming the Roselay Summit, some 21 miles east of Ridgway,—ascending grade going east, only $4\frac{1}{2}$ miles,—descending grade, 14 miles, the less distance being opposed to the direction of the heavy traffic. Over all other portions of the line, the maximum is 10 feet going east, and 17 feet per mile going west. The peculiarly favorable position of the line is evident in a comparative view, as the highest summit between the Susquehanna and Allegheny rivers, is ascertained to be 620 feet lower than the elevation of the tunnel in the same range on the Pennsylvania Central Railroad. Forty miles at the Eastern end are completed and in operation, while 83 miles more are in a rapid state of progress. The recent favorable decisions of the Philadelphia City Councils will put new energy into the entire

work; and we have the authority of Gov. Bigler, President, that it will be pushed to Ridgway without further interruption or delay.

The proposed connections by this route with Philadelphia, New York and Baltimore, are as follows: to Philadelphia, by the Catawissa, Little Schuylkill and Reading Railroads, now in operation the entire distance from Williamsport, 187 miles. Maximum grade, going East, 33 feet per mile, all of which occurs on the Catawissa road, the Little Schuylkill and Reading Roads, being either level or descending in the direction of the heavy traffic. The route to New York diverges from the Philadelphia line near the junction of the Catawissa with the Little Schuylkill Railroad; thence by the Lehigh Valley and New Jersey Railroads to Jersey City, a distance of 227 miles from Williamsport. This is also all complete and in operation, except 14 miles, from the diverging point to Mauch Chunk, which I learn will be finished the coming year. The gradients here are necessarily more undulating than towards Philadelphia, but in no case does the maximum grade exceed 33 feet per mile going east.

The route to Baltimore follows the Sunbury & Erie from Williamsport to Sunbury, 40 miles; thence by the Susquehanna Railroad to Bridgeport, opposite

Harrisburg, 54 miles; thence by the York & Cumberland Railroad to Baltimore, 85 miles. The two last mentioned, were consolidated about a year since under the title of the "Northern Central Railroad." Of the entire distance from Williamsport to Baltimore, 125 miles are completed and in operation. On the remaining 54 miles, from Sunbury to Bridgeport, the grading and masonry are about two-thirds finished, and from present indications, there is little doubt that the entire connection will be perfected in the course of the next twelve months. The gradients upon this line are remarkably favorable from Williamsport to Harrisburg, 94 miles, the maximum in either direction being less than 10 feet per mile. From thence to Baltimore they are much less favorable; but when the projected improvements are carried into effect, it is expected that the maximum grade on this portion will not exceed 50 feet.

It will be seen at a glance, from this brief exhibit, how favorably this great chain of Roads will compare with the existing routes from the West to these three prominent Atlantic Cities in grades, which are the measure of Railroad capacity. It is gratifying, also, to know that in a comparison of distance it shows still greater superiority. From a common point in Ohio, the Chicago and Cincinnati

business can reach New York over this line, with 94 miles less distance than via Buffalo and Albany, while comparatively by the same route, Philadelphia is 38 miles nearer than New York, and Baltimore 14 miles nearer than Philadelphia. Under the rules for the equation of grades, Philadelphia can claim largely the advantage of either in facility of access; but it is fortunate that under a proper appreciation of the merits of this chain, neither city can long remain an indifferent spectator to its progress towards completion.

VENANGO RAILROAD.

STATEMENT BY RALPH CLAPP, ESQ., AGENT.

This Road was chartered on the 30th day of March A. D. 1853, by the Legislature of Pennsylvania, and a supplement of enlarged powers was passed on the 10th April 1853. The charter is one of the most liberal ever granted to any company to build a Road east and west in the said State. The surveyed route commences at Orangeville on the State Line of Ohio and Pennsylvania; thence eastward, via Franklin Venango County, Pa., to Ridgway in Elk County Pa., by perfected surveys, lessening the distance from 120 to 110 miles or less, with a maximum grade

of 52.8 feet per mile, occurring on only ten miles of the whole route—from the Ohio Line to Franklin, to the crossing of the Allegheny River, with a maximum grade of 40 feet per mile occurring only about six miles in that distance; on the balance of the line maximum grade 26 feet per mile; no curve of less than 3 degrees or 1900 feet with a bridge over French Creek, at Franklin, 200 feet long, and a bridge 800 feet long over the Allegheny River two miles above Franklin. After ascending the Summit of the hills skirting the Allegheny River, at a grade of 52.8 feet per mile, the line runs along table land nearly to Ridgway, the proposed point of connection with the Sunbury & Erie; running through the finest pine timber and coal lands in the State. But little work has yet been done on the Line. At the Ohio line commences the Clinton Line Railroad, running west forming a connection with the Venango Road at that point.

CLINTON LINE RAILROAD.

STATEMENT BY PROFESSOR H. N. DAY, PRESIDENT.

The Clinton Line Railroad Company extends from Hudson, O., eastward to the Ohio and Pennsylvania Line, a distance of 55.4 miles. Forty per cent. of the

Grading, Masonry, and Bridging of the Road has been done; contracts have recently been closed for the completion of the Road-bed not already under contract, and also for the superstructure and equipment of the Road, to be finished in about a year. The company, about a month since, commenced an effort to increase the local cash subscription to its capital stock, which has been carried far enough to assure the entire success of the effort within a few weeks. The estimated cost of the Road under the prices of the contracts, inclusive of Equipment, Station Buildings, Fencing, Telegraph, interest and discounts, is \$1,700,000. In connection with this road is the

CLINTON LINE EXTENSION RAILROAD.

The Extension Railroad extends from the Clinton Line at Hudson, to Tiffin, 93.84 miles. This Company commenced work on the heavier sections of the Road, with a view to the completion of the entire road at the same time; after expending about \$70,000 on the eastern division, they were induced by the financial embarrassments of the time to confine their operations to the western division from Tiffin, about 41 miles, to New London, on the Cleveland, Columbus & Cincinnati Railroad; this division being of easier construction, and completing, in connection with other lines, a very promising line of itself to Cleveland;

contracts have recently been made for the completion of the entire Road for operation ; the western division in about one year ; the eastern in a year afterwards. The cost of the Road is estimated, on the basis of the contract prices at \$3,200,000, inclusive of Equipments, Station Building, Fencing, Telegraph, interest and discounts.

The maximum grade on the Clinton Line and Clinton Line Extension Roads going east is 40 feet to the mile : going west it is the same, excepting about four miles at the crossing of the Cuyahoga River, which has been fixed at 45 feet per mile ; the minimum radius of curvature is 2,300 feet, which occurs at a single point ; from Tiffin east for a distance of 70 miles the line is either straight, or curved on a radius of not less than two miles. In the same distance the maximum grade is 30 feet to the mile. The longest single tangent is 28 miles ; there are others of 9, 11, and $12\frac{1}{2}$ miles each.

TIFFIN & FORT WAYNE RAILROAD.

STATEMENT BY R. G. PENNINGTON, ESQ., PRESIDENT.

This Railroad Company was organized in 1853, and is 102 miles in length, and extends from Tiffin, in the county of Seneca, Ohio, to Fort Wayne in Indiana

of which 85 miles are in Ohio, and 17 miles in Indiana, and controlled by two separate organizations, one in each State, no law in Ohio having yet been passed authorizing Lines of Road in that State to consolidate with other Roads, pursuing the same direction, and in connection therewith in other States. This Line of Road has one tangent of about 90 miles in length, with a slight deviation from this, at or near each end, and passes over a section of country of comparatively even surface, with a maximum grade not above 40 feet to the mile, with few streams of any size to cross, the Auglaize River being the most considerable. This Road after leaving Tiffin passes through the following towns viz: Pleasantville, Leipsic, Norwood, Millrose, and New Haven, in Indiana, and terminates at Fort Wayne, where it has connections with the Fort Wayne & Mississippi, the Fort Wayne & Chicago, and the Lake Erie, Wabash & St. Louis Railroads, and upon the east connects with the Clinton Line Extension and Mad River Roads, and 14 miles west of Tiffin also connects with the Fremont & Indiana Railroad, extending from Fremont southwestward. The Tiffin & Fort Wayne Road is an important link of the great Air Line projected and in process of construction from Philadelphia and New York to Council Bluffs, and is being built with a view

especially to aid in the consummation of this stupendous enterprise. The whole Line of the Tiffin & Fort Wayne Road is under contract, with about 50 miles now graded, with ample means provided to fully complete the track ready for the iron. The road is expected to be in full operation by March, 1857.

FORT WAYNE & MISSISSIPPI RAILROAD.

STATEMENT BY L. S. BAYLESS, ESQ.

This company was organized on the 12th day of March A. D. 1853. To this time there has been stock subscribed, payable in land and cash, to the amount of *three hundred thousand dollars*. The entire length of the road from Fort Wayne to the west line of Indiana is *fifty-five* miles. This road passes from Fort Wayne west for sixty miles through a heavy timber country, exhibiting a rich and fertile soil, a great portion of which is under a high state of cultivation; thirty-two miles west of Fort Wayne the Line will cross Eel River at Liberty Mills. Manchester and Millersburgh, two flourishing villages, are situated within three miles of the road, and within five miles of this point, are five flouring mills, containing 14 run of stone, in successful operation, all of

which makes this an important part of the road. From Liberty Mills west this road will pass through Rochester, Winnimac, Francisville, Renssellaer, all of which are flourishing towns, surrounded by a rich and fertile country. The above road has been prepared for letting, but for further particulars, we append the condensed report of Mr. Ferguson, Civil Engineer of said road, made to the President and Directors:

“Gentlemen, during the months of June and July last, pursuant to your orders, all the necessary preliminary examinations and surveys were made for your road between Fort Wayne and Rochester. The general character of the country through which the line runs, is much more favorable for the cheap and easy construction of a road than was anticipated. The following are some of the characteristics of the line as run; commencing on the Depot grounds occupied by the several roads in Fort Wayne, the line runs a little south of west, to the most favorable crossing of the Aboit River; thence nearly due west to Liberty Mills, and thence about seven degrees north of west to Rochester. Length of line from Fort Wayne to Liberty Mills, 31.4 miles, and to Rochester $56\frac{1}{2}$ miles. Length of straight line $55\frac{1}{2}$ miles, and of curved line about one mile, whole amount of curvature about 50 degrees, viz; to the right, 22 degrees,

and to the left 28 degrees. The grades between Fort Wayne and Liberty Mills are as follows : Level, seven miles ; under fifteen feet per mile, 9 6-10 miles ; over fifteen and under twenty-five feet, 12 miles ; over twenty-five and under forty feet 2 2-10 miles ; and over forty and under forty-five feet, six-tenths of a mile ; maximum grade going both east and west forty-five feet per mile ; total rise going west 257½ feet, total fall 275 feet. From Liberty Mills to Rochester the grades are equally favorable, but as the location will vary materially from the line run, it has not been deemed necessary to make them out in detail.

The approximate estimate of work to be done to prepare the road-bed for the iron, including side tracks and tracklaying, between Fort Wayne and Liberty Mills is about \$457,380,00 including all contingencies, or about \$14,000 per mile. The entire cost of the road in running order from Fort Wayne to Liberty Mills will not exceed \$26,000 per mile, which compares favorably with the cost of other western roads. With regard to the advantages and probable business of the road, it is not necessary for me to speak ; that has been repeated time and again, and is not doubted by any one."

PHILADELPHIA, FORT WAYNE & PLATTE RIVER AIR LINE RAILROAD.

STATEMENT BY DR. J. BELL.

This road extends from Tool's Landing oppsite New Boston on the Mississippi, to Council Bluffs on the Missouri. The line of this road leads through the centre of the best tier of counties in Iowa, varying very little from an Air line. The soil is very rich throughout the whole distance, and the settlements are already extensive in every country. This line crosses the Iowa coal fields at the Des Moines River and abounds throughout with every species of material needed for the construction of a Railroad. The company was organized in 1853, under the general Railroad Law of Iowa. The preliminary surveys have been made, and a union effected extending the organization of this and other roads to Fort Wayne in Indiana. Forty-two miles are under contract and about three hundred hands engaged in construction. The subscriptions relied on are private and county subscriptions which the company are assured can be extended so as to secure the preparation of the road-bed as the work advances westward. The principal effort is now made on the first section, but early operations will be extended so as to reach the valley

of the Des Moines, where the surplus products of the country have no convenient mode of transportation. The curves and grades on this road will be exceedingly favorable, and the position of this line is such as to render it the most desirable route that can be found to connect the Mississippi and Missouri Rivers.

WESTERN AIR LINE.

STATEMENT BY E. HURD, ESQ., ENGINEER.

The Western Air Line Road charter covers the right to construct a road across the State of Illinois, from the town of New Boston on the Mississippi to Lacon on the Illinois river, thence in the direction of Fort Wayne, Indiana, to the dividing Line between Indiana and Illinois; on the 22d day of July, A. D. 1853, the Fort Wayne and Mississippi Railroad Company of the State of Indiana; the Western Air Line Railroad Company of the State of Illinois, and the Philadelphia, Fort Wayne & Platte River Air Line Railroad Company of the State of Iowa, entered into articles of association, under the name and style of the "Fort Wayne, Lacon, and Platte River Air Line Railroad Company," under the superintendence of one President, but with distinct, yet consistent organiza-

tions in each of the several States, thus working as a unit.

These roads are important links in the great chain destined to bind the East and West, and compose emphatically an *Air Line*. The line of these roads across the States of Illinois and Iowa, has its bearing nearly in a westerly direction, passing mostly central through the country, developing in its course resources of the highest interest to its future prosperity, as well as to the country at large; the great coal fields underlying a large area of these States are nowhere more strikingly developed than along the line of this road; it is not only to be the great source from which fuel is to be supplied for the running of our trains, but the great vault from whence will be derived the fuel for a nation's consumption. The quarries of marble, limestone, and sandstone discovered are of inestimable value, whether viewed as material for building, or marble for ornamental work, &c. The Air Line when completed, viewed as a thoroughfare for the transit of passengers and freight, has no competition in lines already constructed, shortening as it does, the distance between the Mississippi, Philadelphia and New York 171 miles; its long extended tangents, some of which reach from 30 to 220 miles, its gentle curves, none of which have less radius than thousands of feet,

its easy grades, the average of which for hundreds of miles is less than 15 feet per mile; with its eastern connections having an unbroken gauge for more than 1200 miles, occasioning no break of bulk in freight until it reaches its destination, throws an enchantment around its importance and magnitude, and fixes a nation's attention upon it. It is being full well understood among the masses that whenever this road goes into operation, the same tariff being fixed that is now established on other constructed routes, would save to every passenger making the journey from the Mississippi to Philadelphia or New York, more than \$7,00, and on every ton of freight over \$5,00; it will therefore be seen that the people along the Lines of other roads either to the North or the South, are equally interested in the ultimate construction of this road, knowing full well that the Lines along which they live must reduce their tariff, if a hope be entertained to compete with this. Thus it is seen that the great *Air Line* is no longer local in its effects, but national in its importance and influence.

PLATTE VALLEY & PACIFIC RAILROAD.

STATEMENT BY COL. SAMUEL R. CURTIS.

This company was chartered by the Nebraska Territorial Legislature, in the winter of 1853—54. This charter extends from Omaha, the Capital of Nebraska (directly opposite Council Bluffs), to the western extremity of Nebraska Territory; it follows the immigrant route up the Valley of the Platte so as to pass the Rocky Mountains at Bridges' Pass or the South Pass, as future surveys may require.

The charter is exceedingly liberal, being perpetual, and authorising such branches as may be found expedient. It extends through the central valley of Nebraska where settlements are rapidly extending. This is the Line of the Pacific Railroad as surveyed by Stansbury, Beckwith and others, which has the great advantage of central location (being in latitude 41°); easy grades because it follows river valleys; abundance of water, wood and coal, at reasonable distances, and being the Line where settlements are rapidly filling up, and the Mormon settlement is now located. This Line is a direct prolongation of the various lines here represented, and is destined to become a great trunk, not only for these, but many other roads now in progress, converging towards the Platte Valley. A

road by this route, connecting the navigable waters of the Missouri with the navigable waters of the Sacramento, will, according to the surveys, be about 1800 miles long; the Nebraska portion of which will be about 900 miles long.

Two years are given for the organization of the Nebraska Company, and the work is to commence within five years.

On motion of PROF. DAY.

Resolved, That a committee of three be appointed to draft resolutions expressive of the sense of this Convention, on Railroad subjects. The President appointed Messrs. Day, Col. Curtis, and Hon R. C. Schenck.

PROF. DAY, from the committee on resolutions, reported the following, which were unanimously adopted :

Resolved, That the prospect presented in the reports to this meeting, of the early consummation of the project to construct a Railway from the Atlantic coast across the western valley, recommended in 1829 by Col. De Witt Clinton, and being the first projected line of Railroads extending from the east across the Alleghenies, warrants and prompts our hearty congratulations.

Resolved, That a chain of Railway so truly continental in its character, so pre-eminently direct, level and uninterrupted from the Atlantic to the Missouri River, and admitting of extension in the same line of direction to the Pacific, by the best ascertained central route, traversing in its westward portion the heart of the great western valley, and central in relation to the leading marts and channels of business and travel east and west, demands the most hearty, determined and energetic co-operation on the part of the various

companies charged with the management of the several links of the chain in effecting the completion of the whole enterprise in the earliest time and in the best manner; particularly in securing the most perfect construction of road, and the most improved, and, as far as practicable, a uniform equipment; and also the freest and most liberal arrangements for the connections of the road, and the utmost simplicity and singleness of system in the operation of the entire line.

Resolved, That in order to secure this co-operation more effectually, a standing committee, consisting of the Presidents of the Companies represented in this Convention, with power at their discretion to increase their number by the addition of other members not to exceed in any instance one director from each company, be appointed, who shall represent and promote the common interests of the whole line of road, maintaining a correspondence between the several parts, calling general conventions of the companies from time to time, and in such other ways as they may deem expedient, furthering the general objects of the enterprise.

Resolved, That this Convention approve of the policy of affording governmental aid in the construction of national lines of Railroad, by liberal donations of the public lands.

Resolved, That in the opinion of this Convention, the construction of a railway connecting the Atlantic States with the settlements on the Pacific Coast, under the patronage of the Federal Government, is demanded by vital interests of our national Union.

Resolved, That in consideration of the prevalence of the gauge of four feet eight and a half inches on the roads connecting with our chain of railway, that gauge be adopted by the companies composing this Convention as the common gauge of the chain.

Resolved, That the national importance of this connected line of railway warrants and requires a liberal expenditure for the reduc-

tion of grades and curvatures to the utmost reasonable extent; and this Convention recommend that, in no case, a gradient be admitted exceeding 53 feet to the mile, or a radius of curvature less than 1500 feet.

On motion of HON. R. C. SCHENCK,

Resolved, That a committee of four be appointed with instructions to procure to be published in pamphlet form a full account of the proceedings of this Convention, and that the report be accompanied by a map exhibiting the continued line of the road here represented, and their connections. The Lithographic stone on which such map is printed, to be purchased and hereafter kept for the joint and common use of these roads. E. C. Wilson, T. Tigar, H. N. Day, and P. Ferguson were appointed said committee.

On motion of MR. PENNINGTON,

Resolved, That 200 copies of this report be published for each company and each shall pay their equal share of said expense when the same is ascertained by the committee, the chairman of which is authorized to draw on each company for their several amounts, and that the said copies be forwarded as soon as published.

Resolved, That a list of officers and organizations of each road be published by the committee.

On motion.

Resolved, That the great national route which these Railroads from the Eastern to the Western Oceans be called by the general designation and cognomen of

“THE AMERICAN CENTRAL RAILROAD.”

The above resolutions gave rise to a debate in which Judge Humphrey, Hon. R. C. Schenck, Mr. Clapp, Mr. Pennington, Mr. Day, Gen. Wilson of Tiffin, Mr. Bayless, and Col. Curtis participated.

On motion.

Resolved, That the thanks of the Convention be given to the President and to E. C. WILSON Esq, the acting Secretary, for the able and faithful discharge of the duties imposed upon them.

After short and pithy addresses from HON. VAN. R. HUMPHREY, of Hudson, Ohio, HON. R. C. SCHENCK, President of the Fort Wayne, Lacon & Platte Valley Air Line Railroad, and HON. A. PLUMER, President of the Venango Railroad, the Convention adjourned *sine die*.

SUMMARY.

This Convention think it proper to present a few facts and conclusions that naturally arise while contemplating the completion of this line of roads.

The attention of the merchant, mechanic, agriculturist, manufacturer and traveler is respectfully solicited to the favorable line traversed by *The American Central Railway*. By this road will be brought into close connection and intercourse the points of greatest wealth and population, and the centres of largest capital and most active industry throughout the country. The people of these United States, with their usual determination and judgment, have resolved

upon a great national highway in the centre of the continent, traversing its entire length from east to west. We present this combination of roads as forming an important part of such a line, beginning at the Atlantic seaboard and extending westward, by a direct line, to the Missouri River. Viewed in any aspect, this chain of roads is without a parallel, and is unrivalled as to distance, grades, curves and location. The various roads composing the American Central Railway are all of them in course of construction, and several of them in a great state of forwardness. We respectfully present the following views and statistics, as some of the reasons upon which we claim the particular and favorable consideration of the whole country to this line :

1. *It is a great national thoroughfare in its character and relations.*

This is the first time that an organization has ever been made, under one designation, of a chain of roads extending so long a distance. From Philadelphia and New York to Council Bluffs, on the Missouri, is a distance of between 1200 and 1300 miles. The roads between these points, now known by the consolidated name of "*The American Central Railway*," are all of them in the course of construction, and some of them, indeed, nearly completed. The New York &

Erie Railroad, by the restrictive action of the New York Legislature, was made to terminate at Dunkirk on Lake Erie; has no railroad connections, except accidental ones, and it was thought that the great West was reached when the shore of this Lake was reached by their broad guage road. The New York Central Road from Albany to Buffalo, on Lake Erie, was also built to connect that Lake with the Hudson. The circuitous route of the Lake Shore Road, forms the only accommodation to both of these roads in seeking the commerce and trade of the Western States. The Pennsylvania Central and the Baltimore and Ohio Road were built, the one to connect Philadelphia, and the other Baltimore, with the Ohio river; and while perhaps all these Roads have connections with roads tending westward, yet their course is a long and indirect one, without that uniformity of gauge and construction, and purpose, which could give them any claim to be considered as constituent links in a railway east and west across the continent; the high grades, short curves, and tortuous course of all these roads, while they exhibit the skill of the engineer, and the determination to build a road between two given points, whatever the difficulties in the way, (and while they perform the duties required of them with promptness and efficiency), yet impairing their claims

to be considered parts of a harmonious and continuous highway east and west. It must be borne in mind that the surface of the country necessarily contracts all the lines of railroad communication in our own country, between the great Atlantic ports and the west, within the limits of the narrow isthmus, of a little more than one hundred miles, between Wheeling on the Ohio River, and Cleveland on Lake Erie; the mountain barriers of the South forcing southeastern lines, from a point as far east as Mobile *up*, and the Lakes of the North bending north-western lines *down*, within the same narrow limits. While then the New York & Erie, and New York Central must take a circuitous route southward from their termini; and the Pennsylvania Central, & Baltimore and Ohio must take a circuitous route northward from their termini, to reach the Mississippi and the Missouri, at proper points; the line of roads forming the American Central Railway is located on the dividing ridge between the waters of the Lake and those of the Ohio, in a direct course, with tangents from 30 to 220 miles, to the Mississippi and Missouri. Indeed the very route traversed, by our roads, was pointed out as early as 1830, by Col. DeWitt Clinton, Jr., U. S. Topographical Engineer, as the proper one for a Railroad from the Atlantic to the Mississippi, and on his

map indicated its protraction as far as Council Bluffs, on the Missouri. This is the great natural route for a Railroad, and presses itself upon the consideration of the people of this country.

Centrality should be regarded as a very important consideration, in locating a national trunk across the continent. The depressions in the mountains and the plains between our great rivers must have a controlling influence in seeking the central and national advantage. While the roads represented in this Convention have a route from the Atlantic to the Missouri without a parallel, with easy curves, gentle grades, and its distance nearly 200 miles less than any other known line, with an unbroken gauge; we desire now to speak of the protraction of this favorable Line to the Pacific. The Bridges' Pass route, as indicated by Col. Curtis elsewhere in this pamphlet, is the nearest practicable line, shifting between 42° and 38° , on a great curve, starting at Council Bluffs latitude 41° , bearing a little north to Bridges' Pass which is below latitude 42° , and thence bearing south to San Francisco, latitude 38° . It is therefore opposite the centre of eastern population; it is west of our great commercial cities, and is directly west of our greatest accumulation of property, population, commerce and agricultural wealth. It is central in view

of Pacific territories, of future population, and above all, it is nearest a straight line from New York and Philadelphia to San Francisco, the three great commercial emporiums of this continent, and therefore central as a great highway for nations in their commercial pursuits; this route is through a zone or belt of the earth's surface, where the climate is most favorable for man's greatest exertions; where his blood is neither congealed with frost, nor diluted by heat, where the greater amount of human labor can be concentrated, and where travel and transportation can at all seasons be secure from the deleterious effects of a severe climate. On this route, water, fuel and settlements are found at reasonable and convenient distances. It is emphatically a great central route.

It will be universally conceded that a Railway across the continent to the Pacific is a great national necessity. The surveys of Fremont, Stansbury, Beckwith and others, made upon the authority of the general government, have proved very conclusively that the construction of such a road is not only eminently practicable, but that when its great utility is considered, the cost of the work ought not to be urged against the project. We think the immediate building of a Railway from some point on the Missouri to the Pacific is demanded as almost indispen-

sable to the wants of commerce, and the national defense. Our communications with California, Oregon and other western Territories, cannot much longer make the present circuitous route perform the work which is required by the necessities of those distant parts of our confederacy; and while the inconveniences and delays on the route now traveled may be tolerated in time of peace, yet the national defense, in case of war, cannot afford to encounter the risks and difficulties of a long and dangerous voyage on both oceans. This view of the subject derives additional importance from the late annual report of the Secretary of War. It is there argued that a railroad to the Pacific is indispensable for the reason that it will be the only means of throwing relief into the Pacific States in case of any collision with a maritime power, and that our navy is entirely inadequate to the convoy of the necessary number of storeships; He says: *"that by the usually traveled routes it would be impossible, with any means heretofore used, to furnish the amount of supplies required for the defense of the Pacific coast,"* while in the *"first years of a war with any great maritime power the communication by sea could not be relied upon;"* and as to the expense of transporting munitions of war, &c., says they would, *"at the rates that were paid on the Northern Frontier*

during the last war with Great Britain, exceed sixty millions of dollars per annum," and he also says that "in point of fact, supplies for such an army as would be required, could not be transported across the continent" without the aid of a railroad. The arguments of the learned Secretary in favor of such a road are complete and unanswerable.

But we think this project can also be viewed in a profitable light, as a scheme to extend the freedom and civilization of the age from sea to sea; to build up the forest and wilderness with great States; to unite our people in the great bond of universal prosperity, with one sentiment, one feeling and one interest, which neither distance nor time can obliterate; having but one political creed; the enduring perpetuity of the Union, and confederacy of Free States washed by the Shores of both Oceans.

2. *It is unsurpassed in its local characteristics.*

This chain of roads follows the belt of largest migration and settlement, of highest culture and greatest productiveness. In Pennsylvania it passes through the finest anthracite and bituminous coal lands in the State, and as it proceeds westward encounters the iron and lumber regions of the north-western counties, with numerous furnaces and saw mills, having no outlet for their productions but the contiguous streams

during their uncertain freshets in the spring and fall, and the full development of these resources will make a considerable item in the business of the road, as well as the prosperity of this section of country. In Ohio the Line lies through a territory as densely populated, as highly cultivated, and as rich and productive as any in that State, and there is no portion of like extent farther advanced in independence and substantial wealth. Cleveland, Sandusky, Toledo and Chicago lying to the north of this line of roads, with Pittsburgh, Steubenville, Columbus, Dayton and Cincinnati, on its south, are each of them places of immense trade and commerce; they are however, but the indices of the rich country that lies between and behind them, and constitutes the great agricultural districts from which they derive their growth and importance. This populous and rich grain and stock growing section is traversed through its entire length by this chain of roads, and its great surplus, swelling every successive year, in a ratio outstripping all calculation, will necessarily be thrown on this road, instead of wandering either to the north or the south, to enable it to wend its way to an Eastern market.

The live-stock traffic, which is perhaps the most promising item of railroad transportation, not except-

ing even the passenger business, may be specified as one of commanding importance on this route. The western valley is now the principal source of supply to the eastern markets; and the supply is augmenting from year to year in incalculable ratios. existing means of communication are already overburdened; and from central and southern Illinois, the business is, from deficiency of facilities on our own lines of railway, forced over the Canada routes at greatly increased cost of time and money. The long established route of this business was precisely that of the American Central Railway,—along the dividing line between the waters of the Lakes, and of the Ohio River. By this railway, not only is distance saved, but the more serious delays and expenditures avoided in the transit through cities and in transshipments at inconvenient points. The relationship of this line to the leading eastern markets and to the sources of supply in the west, indicates it at once as the commanding Line of communication for this great traffic.

This road strikes the Mississippi and Missouri at the most convenient points of trade; and the upper waters of both these rivers will bear valuable cargoes in seeking their connection with this Line. The agricultural States of Indiana, Illinois and Iowa, have far

outgrown their means of communication, with proper and convenient markets for the disposal of their immense surplus, which, to compete with the same class of productions of Ohio, New York and Pennsylvania, must have its transit a certain and direct one, without a change of bulk. We believe this chain of roads will afford the needed facilities, being nearly 200 miles shorter than any other route, either constructed or in contemplation; is of one gauge throughout; has such easy grades, with tangents from 30 to 220 miles, that the expenditures of its construction and its operation will be so comparatively cheap, as to enable it to offer to the forwarder and the passenger a safer, more certain, and cheaper transport by 30 per cent., than can be afforded by any combination of roads between the same or intermediate points. The local business that will be furnished to this road, by the great States of Pennsylvania, Ohio, Indiana, Illinois and Iowa, whose entire length it traverses, will more than compensate for the labor and expense in its construction, and in its operation.

3. *The low grades and direct course of this line of road are unsurpassed.*

The Sunbury and Erie road, crosses the Allegheny Mountains with less divergence, and with less and lower grades than either of the three great roads that

now pass these Mountains. The Venango Railroad from Ridgway, where it proposes to connect with the Sunbury & Erie *via Franklin* to the Ohio State Line at some point in Mercer County, is very direct in its course with no grades above 52-8 feet per mile, and that only occurring for a few miles, with no curves greater than three degrees, with favorable ground for its entire distance. The next link west-ward is the Clinton Line and its Extension, from the Pennsylvania State Line to Tiffin in Ohio; this road is building on the table lands of Ohio, is remarkable for its evenness of surface, low grades, and is in a direct line. Next is the Tiffin & Fort Wayne road, commencing at Tiffin in Ohio, and terminating at Fort Wayne, in Indiana; the surface of the ground is so favorable for this road that it requires no grading except to throw up a road bed to protect it from the water, and has one tangent of 90 miles, out of 102 miles its entire length. Next is the Fort Wayne, Lacon & Platte Valley Railroad from Fort Wayne to Council Bluffs, 580 miles, with tangents or straight lines from 30 to 220 miles in length, with grades for hundreds of miles not exceeding fifteen feet to the mile. The whole length of these roads from New York to Council Bluffs is 1298 miles, and from Philadelphia to Council Bluffs is 1260 miles, being 171 miles shorter than any line

now in existence reaching the same points. It crosses no navigable waters but the Mississippi and the Missouri. It strikes no large cities, about which it must make long circuits, or at which it must suffer interruptions and subject its travel to the tedious delays which are ordinarily encountered at such points. Its unity of purpose, of construction, of gauge, and its directness, renders it without a rival, and points it out as the quickest, cheapest, and most convenient transit across the continent.

4. *It commands by means of intersecting roads, the best connections with the leading centres of business in the west not on its own line.*

After crossing the boundary line between Pennsylvania and Ohio, the chain meets at Bristol 17 miles from the line, the Ashtabula and New Lisbon Railroad, now in progress. This road is of the same gauge with the American Central and by its southern division penetrates extremely rich veins of the bituminous and cannel coal basin, while it strikes at its northern terminus, 36 miles from the intersection, the port of Ashtabula on Lake Erie.

Twenty-six miles further west, near Aurora, it intersects the Cleveland & Mahoning road, also of the same gauge.

At Hudson, 55 miles from the State Line, it inter-

sects the Cleveland & Pittsburgh road, 25 miles from its Lake Depot at Cleveland. The distance by this route to New York is 537 miles, while by the Lake Shore & Dunkirk it is 603; to Philadelphia it is by this route 499, by Pittsburgh about the same distance, the equation for grades and curves, giving the American Central road greatly the advantage; to Baltimore 485, by Wheeling and Baltimore & Ohio road 518.

At Hudson it also meets the Painesville and Hudson road at its southern terminus, and the Cleveland, Zanesville & Cincinnati at its northern terminus. By this latter road, an important connection is opened with southern and southwestern Ohio, the distance from New York to Zanesville being 625 miles, and to Cincinnati 785, against 857 by Cleveland & Dunkirk.

At Litchfield, 33 miles from Hudson, it meets the proposed Cleveland & Cincinnati Short Line road, 201 miles from Cincinnati, making the total distance from New York 746 miles and 708 from Philadelphia.

At New London, 53 miles from Hudson, it intersects the Cleveland, Columbus, & Cincinnati road 47 miles from Cleveland and 208 from Cincinnati. This connection not only opens an important communication with Columbus and Cincinnati, by a route 86 miles shorter from New York than by Dunkirk and Cleveland, but also with Indianapolis and St. Louis, with equal gain over the Lake Shore route.

At Norwich, 20 miles further west, it intersects the Sandusky, Mansfield & Newark Road.

At Tiffin, 41 miles from New London, it intersects the Mad River & Lake Erie Road, 35 miles from Sandusky and 180 from Cincinnati. By this road a communication is also opened with Indianapolis.

At this point it intersects, moreover, the projected Cleveland & St. Louis Air Line Road.

At Fort Wayne it meets the Chicago & Fort Wayne Road, 146 miles from Chicago, and with it forms the most direct practicable route between that important city and the Atlantic ports. The distance from Chicago to Cleveland by Fort Wayne and New London is 335 miles, or 20 miles shorter than by the Southern Michigan and Cleveland and Toledo route; to New York the distance by the American Central is 854 miles; by the Lake Shore route 958.

At Fort Wayne the chain also intersects the Lake Erie, Wabash & St. Louis Road, which presents another very direct connection with St. Louis, and also with Springfield, Illinois.

It, moreover, meets the Southern & Fort Wayne Road at this point.

West of Fort Wayne, in Indiana, it intersects the Cincinnati, Logansport & Chicago Road, presenting another favorable route to Chicago.

Thirty-five miles east of the Illinois State Line

it crosses the New Albany & Salem Road; nineteen miles west of the State Line it intersects the Chicago Branch of the Illinois Central; thirty miles further west it intersects the Mississippi & Chicago Road; thirty miles further the Main Stem of the Illinois Central, and forty-eight miles further the Central Military Tract Road.

From this enumeration of the lines of railroad traversing or terminating in this chain, with most if not all of which it must invite arrangements for the free interchange of business, it will readily be seen that its radiations reach to all the leading points of trade in the great valley.

In conclusion we must express our conviction that this whole Line from sea to sea, will, in a few years, be successfully accomplished. Its entire practicability, its necessity, and its prospective earnings and profits give it an importance that will early secure the completion of the desired transit across the continent.

When Ferdinand and Isabella of Spain fitted out Columbus on his errand west-ward to discover a new route to the East Indies, they knew not that, directed by providence, they were accomplishing their purpose. The route to India is in the path of Columbus; it is now opened, and across this continent will here-

after flow the stream of wealth and commerce, and people, to the shores of the Pacific, to the Indies, to Japan, to China.

A highway on such a route will be a glorious national monument that will command the admiration of the world, as one worthy of this great people, and will serve to develop the rapid changes of this eventful age. In such a work there should be concentrated the strength, energy and power of the nation; differences should be regretted and forgotten, and united influences should rejoice in the early completion of the greatest work in the world.

BY ORDER OF THE CONVENTION.

EDWIN C. WILSON, SEC'Y,

and Chairman of the Committee of Publication.

DECEMBER 20, 1855.

TABLE OF DISTANCES

BY THE

AMERICAN CENTRAL RAILWAY.

	From	N. York	Philadel.	Baltim're
To Williamsport.....		225	187	173
“ Ridgway.....	122	347	309	295
“ Franklin.....	62	409	371	357
“ Ohio State Line.....	48	457	419	405
“ Hudson.....	55	512	474	460
“ New London.....	53	565	527	513
“ Tiffin.....	41	606	568	554
“ Fort Wayne.....	102	708	670	656
“ New Albany & Salem Railroad....	95	803	765	751
“ Illinois Central R. R., Chicago br.	53	856	818	804
“ Mississippi & Chicago Railroad...	30	886	848	834
“ Illinois Cent. R. R., main stem....	30	916	878	864
“ Lacon.....	20	936	898	884
“ Central Military Tract Railroad....	37	973	935	921
“ New Boston.....	42	101	977	963
“ Oskaloosa.....	88	1103	1065	1051
“ Council Bluffs City.....	185	1288	1250	1236
“ Sacramento River.....	1850	3138	3100	3086

TABLE OF DISTANCES BY LATERAL CONNECTIONS.

	From	N. York	Philadel.	Baltim're
To Cleveland from Hudson.....	25	537	499	485
“ Cincinnati, by Zanesville.....	273	785	747	733
“ do by Litchfield.....	234	746	708	694
“ do from New London.....	207	772	734	720
“ do from Tiffin.....	180	786	748	734
“ Chicago, from Fort Wayne.....	146	854	816	802
“ Indianapolis, from New London...	233	798	760	746
“ St. Louis, from Indianapolis.....	271	1069	1031	1017

COMPARATIVE DISTANCES TO CHICAGO.

From New York —		From New York —	
To Albany	144	To Albany	144
“ Buffalo	298	“ Niagara Falls.....	305
“ Cleveland	183	“ Detroit.....	230
“ Toledo.....	112	“ Chicago.....	282
“ Chicago.....	243		
	<hr/>		<hr/>
	980 miles		961 miles
To Albany.....		To Dunkirk.....	
“ Cleveland.....	481	“ Cleveland.....	143
“ New London.....	47	“ Toledo.....	112
“ Tiffin.....	41	“ Chicago.....	243
“ Fort Wayne.....	102		
“ Chicago.....	146		<hr/>
	<hr/>		958 miles
	961 miles		
To Dunkirk.....		To Philadelphia.....	
“ Cleveland.....	143	“ Blairsville.....	300
“ New London.....	47	“ New Castle.....	87
“ Fort Wayne.....	143	“ Cleveland.....	85
“ Chicago.....	146	“ Toledo.....	112
	<hr/>	“ Chicago.....	243
	939 miles		<hr/>
			914 miles
To Philadelphia.....		To Williamsport.....	
“ Pittsburgh.....	353	“ Ridgway.....	122
“ Fort Wayne.....	318	“ Kinsman.....	110
“ Chicago.....	146	“ Fort Wayne.....	251
	<hr/>	“ Chicago.....	146
	904 miles		<hr/>
			854 miles
From Philadelphia —		From Philadelphia	
To Pittsburgh.....	353	To Williamsport.....	187
“ Fort Wayne.....	318	“ Fort Wayne.....	483
“ Chicago.....	146	“ Chicago.....	146
	<hr/>		<hr/>
	817 miles		816 miles

The chief advantage possessed by the American Central route over the other, consists in its having far more favorable grades and curves, and also a track uninterrupted by any navigable stream, or by any change of gauge, on its entire line to the Mississippi.

TO CINCINNATI.

From New York —		From New York —	
To Cleveland by Buffalo....	625	To Zanesville by Am. Cent.	625
“ Cincinnati	255	“ Cincinnati	160
	<hr/> 880 miles		<hr/> 785 miles
To Cleveland by Dunkirk..	602	To New London by Am. Cen.	565
“ Cincinnati	255	“ Cincinnati	207
	<hr/> 857 miles		<hr/> 772 miles
		To Litchfield by Am. Cent.	545
		“ Cincinnati	200
			<hr/> 745 miles

TO ROCK ISLAND.

From New York —		From New York —	
To Chicago by Buffalo.....	980	To Chicago by Dunkirk.....	958
“ Rock Island.....	182	“ Rock Island.....	182
	<hr/> 1162		<hr/> 1140 miles
To Chicago by Detroit.....	961	To Ft. Wayne by Am. Cent.	708
“ Rock Island.....	182	“ Galvy	242
	<hr/> 1143 miles	“ Rock Island.....	34
			<hr/> 984 miles
From Philadelphia —		From Philadelphia —	
To Pittsburgh.....	353	To Ft. Wayne by Am. Cent.	670
“ Fort Wayne.....	318	“ Galvy	242
“ Chicago.....	146	“ Rock Island.....	34
“ Rock Island.....	182		<hr/> 946 miles
	<hr/> 999 miles		

TO ST. LOUIS.

From New York —		From New York —	
To Cleveland by Buffalo....	625	To New London by Am. Cent.	565
“ Galion.....	79	“ Galion.....	32
“ Indianapolis.....	201	“ Indianapolis.....	201
“ Terre Haute.....	73	“ Terre Haute.....	73
“ Alton	173	“ St. Louis	198
“ St. Louis.....	25		<hr/> 1069 miles
	<hr/> 1176 miles		
		To Ft. Wayne by Am. Cent.	708
		“ Paris.....	176
		“ St. Louis.....	178
			<hr/> 1062 miles

